(d) Funds have been allocated to Maharashtra according to their entitlement.

(e) Maharashtra has a total length of 2918 km. of NH and ranks slightly behind Madhya Pradesh (2946 km.j and Rajasthan (2931 km.).

**Construction of ports**

897. SHRISANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has planned to build some new major ports in the country;

(b; if so, the details thereof;

(cj the detail of the foreign investment coming to India specially for the purpose of port construction; and

(d) the main foreign companies showing interest in constructing ports in the country?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) and (b) The Government have entrusted a study to M/s RITES on Perspective Plan for Indian Port Sector-Vision 2020, which will cover traffic projections, critical examination of existing condition of the ports, their capacity and constraints, the scope for augmentation of capacity in short and long terms, identification and removal of other infrastructure constraints etc.

(c) The major foreign investment has been coming by way of BOT project and foreign collaboration with Indian Companies.

(d; The foreign companies which have shown interest include M/s P&O Australia, M/s Gateway Distriparks, M/s Van Oord, ACZ Waterbuow, M/s ETA Port, M/s Jim Israel Navigation Co., M/s Stalt-Nielsen, M/s Korea Heavy Industries and Construction Co., M/s Evergreen, M/s Stevedoring Services of America, M/s Samsung, M/s Marubeni, M/s Keppel, M/s Lisnave.

**Commissioning of new ports**

898. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have undertaken any study to identify the scope of Commissioning of new ports to meet the increasing needs of the country for port facilities;

(b) if so, what is the outcome of the study; and

(c) what conclusions were arrived at and by when the new ports are likely to be commissioned?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) to (c) The Government have entrusted a study to M/s RITES on Perspective Plan for Indian Port Sector—Vision 2020 which will cover traffic protections, critical examination of existing conditions of the ports, their capacity and constraints, the scope for augmentation of capacity in short and long terms, identification and removal of other infrastructure constraints etc.

**Progress of state highways projects funded by centre**

899. SHRMATIJAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to refer to the answer to Unstarred Question 175 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 23rd July, 1997 and state:

(a) the names of those 16 State Highways and total length thereof for which Rs. 50 crores-was sanctioned during Eighth Plan;

(b) whether those projects have been completed;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor and the progress thereof as on date;

(d) whether the Ninth Plan has now been Finalised; and

(e) if so, the Highways and State roads identified in Orissa and other States for Central funding?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T. G. VENKAT-RAMAN): (a) A statement is enclosed *(See* below).

(b) and (c) These projects have been sanctioned recently and are at various stages of implementation.

(d) and (e) The Ninth Plan is yet to be finalised. \